Volume 17, No. 6 June 1989

7/31/89 R5685-4

FOCUS

The monthly magazine of the Joint Center for Political Studies®

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Perspective

ISSN 0740-0195

PRICE $1.50

Congress Must Return to the People's Business

Since the opening gavel sounded in January, the 101st Congress has had very little to brag or write home about. The House of Representatives has been so embroiled in ethics investigations—some of them apparently initiated as thinly disguised partisan attacks—that it has only passed a handful of bills.

Meanwhile, many major issues that affect the health of the nation as a whole and the black community in particular are being largely ignored. Surely, it is time for Congress to return to the people's business.

Two national issues which require immediate attention are discussed in this month's *Focus*. They are the deterioration of public education and the decline in affordable housing.

While Rep. Julian Dixon (D-Calif.) has recently been in the news as chair of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, the panel charged with investigating ethics transgressions, his Low-Income Housing Revitalization Act, introduced in February, has received scant attention. The bill, as described by Congressman Dixon on the adjoining page, would use tax policy to encourage the renovation and construction of low and moderate-income housing. Immediate action is critical, he notes, since "hundreds of thousands if not millions of Americans, including families with children, live on the streets and in shelters ... [while] thousands of public and private housing units are vacant, needing rehabilitation." Dixon further observes that while our government enacted the Housing Act of 1949 to promise a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family, "that promise has yet to be kept, and for many families it is little more than a mockery."

The chronic inequality in public education, which offers only second-class schooling to many black and Hispanic children, is also discussed in this issue. In *Visions Of A Better Way: A Black Appraisal of Public Schooling*, reviewed here, the Joint Center's distinguished Committee on Policy for Racial Justice calls for new directions in the nation's approach to public education. The committee demands that the schools "shift their focus from the supposed deficiencies of the black child—from the alleged inadequacies of black family life—to the barriers that stand in the way of academic success." The committee members challenge blacks and other minorities as well as educators, public officials, and corporate leaders to take direct political action to push education reform to the top of the nation's policy priorities.

On the political front, this issue of *Focus* includes short commentaries written by Ronald H. Brown, chairman of the Democratic National Committee; Rep. William H. Gray, the newly elected House Majority Whip; and Harvard law professor Christopher Edley, Jr., who was issues director for Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis' presidential campaign.

The continuing quest for stronger black political participation is aimed at improving the social and economic conditions of black Americans and indeed the quality of life for all Americans. In this year's elections, in the 1990 mid-term elections, and of course in the 1992 presidential election, we will be challenged to redouble our efforts. And on a daily basis we must seek to influence both public officials and public policies by our informed activism.

As Congressman Dixon writes: "We share a sense of urgency because something has to be done. Not tomorrow. Not next year. Now." ■

Eddie N. Williams

PRESIDENT

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Housing: Recognizing the Crisis, Taking Action

California Congressman Proposes Legislation to Address the Shortage of Affordable, Decent Housing for Lower-Income Americans

by Rep. Julian C. Dixon

In 1985, a black judge on the Los Angeles Municipal Court found a creative way to deal with our country's deteriorating lower-income housing stock. Judge Veronica Simmons McBeth sentenced a notorious slumlord to 30 days in one of his own rodent-infested buildings. The slumlord, like his lower-income tenants, had to live with shattered glass, peeling plaster, broken plumbing, and loose electrical wires. In a poetic and legal sense, justice was truly served.

Other creative ideas must be enlisted if our nation is to recover from the most serious housing crisis in a generation. Hundreds of thousands if not millions of Americans, including families with children, live on streets and in shelters. Almost one million families are on lengthy waiting lists for public housing, and many lists are closed to new applicants. Thousands of public and private housing units are vacant, needing rehabilitation. And rising rents have been outstripping the availability and level of rent subsidies.

That is why I have introduced in Congress the Low-Income Housing Revitalization Act (H.R.1005), designed to encourage the renovation and construction of low and moderate-income housing. Others in Congress have also begun to act. We share a sense of urgency because something has to be done. Not tomorrow. Not next year. Now.

The Housing Shortage: "No Vacancies Until 2001"

Choose any community in America and the story remains the same. In my hometown of Los Angeles, there are thousands of people on a waiting list for the Section 8 federal rent subsidy program, and they will have to wait at least two years before their applications are approved. The waiting list has been closed to new applicants since September 1986. In the shadow of the nation's Capitol, 13,000 people in need of adequate housing are on a 10-year waiting list for apartments in public housing projects.

Or consider the case of a woman in Providence, Rhode Island. Last year, she received a letter validating her eligibility as a "very-low income" applicant for federal housing. "Unfortunately," said the letter, "there are no appropriate-sized apartments available at the present time .... You probably will not be admitted before March, 2001."

Forty years ago, our government enacted the Housing Act of 1949, which promised "a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family." Today, that promise has yet to be kept, and for many families it is little more than a mockery. As a 1988 report by Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies concluded, "America is increasingly becoming a nation of housing haves and have-nots."

To lead minimally decent lives, the poor need affordable housing. But there is less and less of it available. Only 28 percent of lower-income families eligible for housing assistance will receive it this year. To cope, families in already crowded public housing projects double up, and some even triple up. Out of the 174,000 public housing units in New York City, as many as 50,000 are illegally occupied by more than one family, up from 17,000 two years ago.

Since 1980, 2.5 million lower-income housing units have disappeared from the housing stock nationwide, either because of neglect or conversion to luxury condominiums or office buildings. The Washington, D.C.-based Children's Defense Fund estimates a shortfall of four million affordably priced units nationally. And according to a 1987 study by Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Phillip Clay, if current circumstances and policies continue, our nation will suffer a shortfall of 7.5 million privately-owned low-income housing units by the year 2000.

This housing squeeze shatters hopes and burdens families. Almost two-thirds of all lower-income renters pay at least 50 percent of their income in rent, according to a study just released by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Low Income Housing Information Service. Among blacks and Hispanics of all income levels, one in five devote more than half of their income to housing. That leaves little for food and other basic needs—let alone for education, health, or child care.

(Continued on page 4)

Rep. Dixon (D-Calif.) chairs the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct and is also a member of the Committee on Appropriations of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Housing

(Continued from page 3)

But this is not just a question of being able to afford housing. It is also about providing decent housing. In this, the richest nation in the world, having a roof over one's head is not enough. In the 1960s, nearly one-fourth of the nation's housing stock lacked complete plumbing facilities or was considered dilapidated. Although that has changed for the better, approximately 7.4 million housing units were considered substandard in 1985—Third World conditions for American citizens.

Families with children make up one-fourth of the nation's homeless population, and in many cities they make up well over half.

One of the key factors behind the American housing tragedy is poverty. More than 32 million of our fellow citizens live in poverty, and another 22 million are barely surviving at just 50 percent above the poverty line. In real dollars, incomes for the poor and working poor have stagnated or declined in the last decade.

For those without the means to pay, there is often nowhere to go but the streets. Estimates of the homeless population in America range from 300,000 to more than two million. Perhaps even more shocking, families with children make up one-fourth of the nation's homeless population, and in many cities they make up well over half. For the working poor, homelessness frequently leads to unemployment because a worker without a home often cannot keep a steady job. And for the black working poor, who live with the additional burden of job discrimination, this combination can be permanently disabling.

Reagan's Housing Policy: A Legacy of Shame

President Reagan's policies worsened the housing crisis. Funding for federal housing assistance was slashed a staggering 82 percent in the Reagan years, from more than $41.6 billion to $7.4 billion (all figures are in constant 1988 dollars). It would have been cut even more had Congress not appropriated almost three times what Reagan requested. The shortfall of affordably priced lower-income housing has more than doubled over the last decade.

During the 1970s, federal assistance helped to build or rehabilitate approximately 200,000 units each year. That number is now down to fewer than 25,000, with only a small portion allocated for family housing because most of the units are intended for senior citizens. Moreover, most of the new construction or rehabilitation during the 1980s was approved under the Carter administration and had little to do with Reagan administration policies. Had we kept the housing budget frozen at the FY80 level, 1.5 million more families could have been housed.

The housing pipeline is now running dry. The one Reagan initiative, housing vouchers, added no new units and does not protect renters from rising urban housing prices. Compounding the problem are hundreds of thousands of privately-owned low-income housing units that may soon be lost to their residents. The special mortgage program that spurred construction of these units in the 1960s and 1970s may soon enable the owners to sell the apartments or rent them at prevailing market rates. That may mean higher rents, more condominium conversions, increased stress on government housing programs, and more homelessness.

Unfortunately, President Bush has not requested a single dollar for new public housing construction. Bush's budget request of only $1 billion for public housing modernization is also inadequate. A 1987 study by Clark Abt Associates of Cambridge, Massachusetts, commissioned by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, estimates that between $18 billion and $22 billion is needed to repair and restore the current public housing stock.

Time for Action

Before the Reagan years, federal housing programs had bipartisan support, even from the most conservative legislators. It is time to rebuild this national consensus on housing. While no single solution will solve our nation's housing crisis, the Low-Income Housing Revitalization Act could help reverse the decline in affordable housing by providing tax incentives to private investors willing to rehabilitate, renovate, or build low- and moderate-income rental housing units. The bill would amend the 1986 Tax Reform Act by extending the low-income housing credit beyond the expiration date of December 31, 1989, and shorten the depreciation recovery period on low-income rental property from 27.5 to 20 years.

While this bill would provide developers with a "carrot" to construct rental units, it would also eliminate tax breaks for owners who fail to keep units up to local housing standards. Currently, owners of substandard units can claim federal tax deductions without making necessary repairs and renovations. Under my bill, owners who maintained their units would get the tax deduction, while slumlords who let their tenants live in unsafe and unhealthy conditions would not. This approach has worked in California, which issued more than 1,500 notices of noncompliance in 1987 resulting in $268,165 of forfeited state tax breaks.

The bill currently has 47 sponsors, Democrats and Republicans, and hearings are expected later this year in Rep. Charles Rangel's (D-N.Y.) Ways and Means Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures. The bill may eventually be included in a modification of the entire low-income housing tax program. Other bills to expand federal housing programs are also making their way through Congress. The bottom line is that more must be done to address the nation's housing crisis.

This is not a black problem or a white problem, but an American problem. Our nation has waited far too long to address our housing needs, and the situation worsens daily. The millions of people on the edge of survival can no longer wait. It is time to act. ■

June 1989

JCPS

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Inside This Issue

- Congressman William Gray becomes the first black House majority whip in the history of the Congress.
- Early indications suggest that few blacks are likely to be appointed to federal judgeships by George Bush.
- New York City schools remain troubled as the city searches for a successor to black chancellor Richard Green, who died in May.

Congressman Gray Whips Adversity

The champagne flowed on Flag Day, June 14, in the offices of Pennsylvania Representative WILLIAM H. GRAY after his first-ballot election victory to become the majority whip in the U.S. House of Representatives, the third highest position in the House Democratic leadership. Gray will replace TONY COELHO (D-Calif.), who resigned earlier this month after reports surfaced that he was being investigated for alleged improper investment activities. Gray's achievement is historic in that no other black legislator has ever reached such high rank. He will play a major role in forming legislative policy and will be his party's point man in moving bills through the House.

In just over ten years in the House, Gray has also occupied two other leadership posts never before attained by a black. He served two terms as chair of the powerful House Budget Committee and was elected chair of the House Democratic Caucus at the end of the last Congress (see TL November-December 1988). As whip, a post once held by new speaker **TOM FOLEY** (D-Wash.), Gray now ranks in the House behind Foley and Majority Leader **RICHARD GEPHARDT** (D-Mo.). (When Rep. **JIM WRIGHT** [D-Tex.] resigned as speaker this month in the face of charges of financial impropriety, Foley, then majority leader, moved up to replace him, and Gephardt was elected to the majority leader's post.)

As with his other leadership positions, Gray had to overcome stiff competition to become whip. But after intense, non-stop campaigning he garnered enough support from House Democrats to sweep the other two contenders, chief deputy majority whip DAVID BONIOR (D-Mich.) and BERYL ANTHONY JR. (D-Ark.) who chairs the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. Surprising many who expected a close race requiring a run-off vote, Gray won with 134 votes on the first ballot (Bonior received 97 and Anthony 30).

To get that far, Gray had to first overcome an allegation that he was being investigated by the FBI for carrying a no-show employee on his congressional payroll. The allegation had been leaked to the press by a Justice Department source on May 30, just as the race for House whip was heating up. Outraged at the timing of the leak, Gray quickly responded by questioning publicly whether someone at the Justice Department was attempting to sabotage his campaign for the post and by demanding that the leak be investigated by Attorney General RICHARD THORNBURGH. At first the allegation seemed to cast doubt on the ethics of Gray's conduct. But members of Congress from both parties soon joined in a storm of protest aimed at the Justice Department, creating a backlash that may have actually helped Gray. All remaining doubts were erased when, just two days before the whip election, Thornburgh sent Gray a letter confirming that he was not the target of an investigation.

Born in Baton Rouge, La., Gray moved with his family to Philadelphia where his father and grandfather both pastored Bright Hope Baptist church in a black neighborhood on the city's North side. Congressman Gray, himself a minister with two masters degrees in divinity, is the pastor at Bright Hope today and returns home to preach 35 to 40 Sundays a year. The North side provided the political base from which he has run for the House of Representatives. In his first bid for elective office in 1976, Gray lost narrowly to black incumbent Congressman **ROBERT NIX**, but he beat Nix convincingly two years later. Gray's meteoric ascent to whip testifies to the fact that he is one of the most skilled politicians in America.

He brings to his new position the deft touch of a negotiator and solid experience as a coalition builder; both should be useful in a House scarred by partisan fighting. He proved his ability to make deals by getting

budgets through Congress when Ronald Reagan was in the White House and the Republicans controlled the Senate during the 99th Congress (1985 and 1986). As a vice chair of the Democratic Leadership Council, a group of Democratic elected officials dominated by moderates and conservatives mainly from the South and West, Gray has shown that he can work with policy makers ranging from the left to the right of the political spectrum. Yet he has also maintained his own commitment to progressive politics, being one of the chief legislative proponents of economic sanctions against South Africa and working hard to get minority business set-aside legislation passed. Gray, who is 47, also has demonstrated that he has the intelligence, ability, and experience to be a major political force on the national scene for years to come.

Bush's Bad Start on Appointing Black Judges

Despite what may be his good intentions, GEORGE BUSH is off to a poor start at appointing blacks to federal judgeships. According to the Justice Department, there are presently 47 vacant judgeships—12 on federal appellate courts and 35 on lower district courts. But so far only one black candidate—Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) chairman CLARENCE THOMAS—has been named to fill any of these empty seats. Black bar associations and civil rights groups are concerned that the pattern established by RONALD REAGAN of excluding blacks from the federal bench is continuing under President Bush. But some of the blame for this slow start in black appointments must be shared by Republican members of Congress, since they recommend most of the candidates for lower-court judgeships to the Justice Department.

The 47 judgeships at issue are among the 757 judicial posts mandated by Article III of the U.S. Constitution. These life-term presidential appointments include federal district, appeals, and Supreme Court judges, as well as the nine members of the Court of International Trade. During his two terms in office, Ronald Reagan named 385 judges (more than half of the entire federal bench)—the largest number appointed by any president in history. His appointees were mainly white men from the ideological right. Only seven (less than two percent) were black: six appointments to district courts and one to an appeals court. Reagan's record of black judicial appointments is the worst since the presidency of DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER. By contrast, JIMMY CARTER conferred 38 of 265 appointments (14 percent) to blacks, more than any other president.

These judicial appointments are significant because federal courts rule on major issues that affect the lives of every American—including equal employment opportunity, the right of women to have abortions, employee drug testing, and the right of privacy. Many civil rights advocates, already alarmed that Reagan-appointed judges are shifting the courts toward limiting affirmative action remedies in employment cases, are worried that the trend may be continued by Bush appointees. The U.S. Supreme Court has recently struck down the city of Richmond's minority business set-aside program and has handed down three other rulings that will make it more difficult to prove and correct discrimination in employment. Each of Reagan's appointees to the Court concurred in those rulings (these decisions were anticipated by civil rights attorney Frank Parker in his article, "The Supreme Court: Which Way on Civil Rights," *Focus*, October 1988).

By tradition, nominees to district courts are recommended by U.S. senators from the same party as the president. An exception is New York, where by a gentlemen's agreement, Republican Sen. ALFONSE D'AMATO selects three judges for every one selected by his Democratic New York colleague, Sen. DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN. Several senators use "merit committees" to screen applicants for vacant judgeships. These arrangements differ in states where there are no senators from the president's party. In Michigan, for example, a clearance committee of Republicans selects three or four names to send to the Justice Department; the committee is made up of the state's seven Republican members of the U.S. House of Representatives, the chair of the Michigan GOP, and the chair of the 1988 Bush-Quayle presidential campaign committee. Senators and clearance committees in Alabama, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, and Pennsylvania have already recommended candidates for some of the 35 federal district court judgeships now vacant, but none from these states are black (see table below).

It is unlikely that many blacks will be selected for judgeships because few of them have been included on lists of judicial candidates and few have been invited to participate in the selection process. This is due, in part, to the legacy of the Reagan administration. "Reagan made it pretty clear early on that he wasn't interested in appointing blacks to the courts, so they stopped applying," says JAMES COLE, legal counsel at Clorox Company and president of the National Bar Association (NBA). In addition, merit committees generally attract candidates through passive recruiting techniques, like advertisements in legal publications and newspapers, but few of them use outreach mechanisms to actively bring blacks into the process. JOHN CRUMP, executive director of the NBA, complains that his organization, which has a network of 12,000 black attorneys, judges, law faculty and students nationwide, has not been used as a resource for judicial selections by members of Congress or the Reagan and Bush administrations. "We really don't have the input we would like to have," says Crump. IRWIN EVANS, who just completed a one-year term as president of the California

Association of Black Lawyers, notes the same problem at the state level. Says Evans, "[Senator] **PETE WILSON** (R-Calif.) hasn't asked us to recommend any names for judgeships and doesn't request our input." None of California's 17 district judges appointed during Wilson's six years in office has been black. Crump also notes that few blacks have been picked through merit selection committees, saying, "it only becomes *merit* when it's convenient to throw up a road block against blacks."

Despite a general failure by Republican members of Congress to choose blacks for lower courts, President Bush has indicated his intention to nominate Clarence Thomas to fill a vacancy on the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals. That vacancy was left by ROBERT BORK, who resigned the post after a Senate majority voted not to confirm him for a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court. While civil rights organizations have not taken a position on Thomas's pending nomination they did oppose, unsuccessfully, his appointment to the EEOC chair for a second term during Senate confirmation hearings in 1986. The NAACP gave the agency low marks for its enforcement of equal employment opportunity laws under Thomas's leadership.

Another factor that seems to be blocking the nomination of blacks to federal judgeships is confusion over policy on the political party affiliation and judicial philosophy of candidates. Several officials involved in selecting district judges say that blacks were rarely appointed to judgeships by the Reagan administration because few black attorneys are Republicans. Yet Bush administration officials have told NBA president Cole that non-Republicans would be considered. "We are trying to attract as many minorities and women into the judiciary as possible with the understanding that about 90 percent of federal judges come from the party of the president," says Murray Dickman, an assistant to Attorney General Richard Thornburgh. Dickman adds that candidates are not required to pass an ideological litmus test but *are* expected to reflect the philosophy shared by Thornburgh and the president of rejecting "judicial activism." If the Bush administration does request assistance in locating black candidates, one person who is prepared to provide the White House with a list of qualified black attorneys, including Republicans, is ALTHEA T.L. SIMMONS, director/chief lobbyist

Vacant Federal District Judgeships in Selected States With Large Pools of Black Attorneys

State & Individual District	Main City in District	Number of Vacancies	Nomination Status as of June 14, 1989
Alabama			Republican clearance committee has recommended two names for the Northern District and four for the Southern—*no blacks.*
Northern	(Birmingham)	1	
Southern	(Mobile)	1	
California			Sen. Pete Wilson (R) has not recommended anyone to fill this vacancy.
Central	(Los Angeles)	1	
Illinois			Rep. Robert Michel (R) has sent three names to the Justice Department—*no blacks.*
Northern	(Chicago)	1	
Louisiana			Republican Patronage Committee is preparing a list of names to send to the Justice Department—*no blacks.*
Western	(Lafayette/Opelousas)	1	
Maryland (One state district)	(Baltimore)	2	One seat will go to Marvin Garbis who was nominated by Reagan but not confirmed. For the other seat, Rep. Helen Bentley (R) will recommend three names from about 13 candidates—*no blacks.*
Michigan			Republican clearance committee has sent three names to the Justice Department—*no blacks.*
Eastern	(Detroit)	1	
New York			Sens. Alfonse D'Amato (R) and Daniel Moynihan (D) have recommended four candidates to the Justice Department. One person named by D'Amato is black.
Southern	(Manhattan)	4	
Eastern	(Brooklyn)	2	
Pennsylvania			Republican Sens. John Heinz and Arlen Specter have recommended one candidate each for the Western and Eastern Districts—*neither is black.* No recommendation has been made for the remaining Western District seat.
Western	(Pittsburgh)	2	
Eastern	(Philadelphia)	1	
Texas			Republican Sen. Phil Gramm's office refused to provide any information to *Focus* for this report.
Southern	(Houston)	1	

Source: Joint Center for Political Studies. (Information on the number of judicial vacancies and their locations was provided by the U.S. Department of Justice.)

of the NAACP Washington Bureau. Although Simmons is willing to take a wait-and-see attitude toward the Bush administration, she says, "I don't see the president doing anything outside of the Reagan mold so far." All five of Bush's first judicial nominees (each of them white) were originally nominated by Ronald Reagan but were not confirmed by the Senate during the last Congress. For civil rights advocates and leaders in the black legal community, George Bush will show that he is committed when he starts sending lists of judicial candidates back to senators if they don't include any names of blacks.

Death of N.Y.C. Chancellor Exacerbates City's Education Crisis

The recent death after only 14 months in office of Dr. RICHARD R. GREEN, New York City's first black chancellor of schools, has left that city's troubled school system in disarray. Given New York's current fractious mayoral campaign during a period of high racial tension, choosing a successor may be extremely difficult.

New York City's public schools suffer in magnified form nearly every problem found in urban schools across America. With slightly less than a million students and nearly a thousand school buildings, the city's school system is the nation's largest. Its schools continue to experience some of the highest dropout rates and lowest standardized test score averages in the country, as well as growing in-school violence and severe overcrowding. (Causes of and solutions to problems such as these are discussed in a recent Joint Center publication, "Visions Of A Better Way: A Black Appraisal Of Public Schooling," reviewed in this issue of *Focus*). Yet in his very short tenure, Green had made substantial progress toward improving the education available to the city's youth. Given the complexity of the system's entrenched central bureaucracy, as well as the highly politicized and, of late, scandal-prone decentralized school boards, Green's accomplishments surprised many.

Green, who died at the age of 52 of a lifelong asthma condition on May 11, was regarded by many who worked with him as an effective reformer. He reduced the bloated central school board bureaucracy by eliminating roughly one-fifth of its staff positions, and scraped up enough public/private funding to ensure the rehabilitation of more than 100 elementary school libraries over the next three years. Moreover, among the many initiatives Green established were two instructional programs that have received wide attention: an evening high school program, which offers a full school-day's course work after-hours for working youths and adults, and a summer preparatory program for at-risk youngsters, which has proven so popular it will be doubled in size this summer to accommodate roughly 20,000 kindergarten and first-grade students.

Yet some of the school system's fundamental problems—low achievement, school violence, drug abuse—will linger as formidable obstacles for Green's successor. The next chancellor will also inherit a major continuing dilemma: how to engineer significant parental involvement in the city's schools given a decentralized school board structure that has been rapidly losing the public's trust. Decentralization and parental involvement are issues that other city school systems, such as Chicago's and Milwaukee's, are also grappling with. New York City's 32 locally elected boards run all the elementary and junior high schools in its five boroughs (the high schools are centrally governed by a single, appointed board of education). These local boards are increasingly under fire as problems of corruption and mismanagement continue to surface. They are routinely described in the media and by reformers as being dominated by politicians and school employee unions that allegedly treat much of school hiring as political patronage. Last year, when board members of Districts 9 and 25 in the Bronx were indicted by grand juries on bribe-taking charges, Green had to suspend both boards altogether.

Green's other efforts to reform the existing administrative system were largely frustrated. Although he urged parents to run for board seats and vote in elections, turnout in New York's recent May 2 board elections was estimated at six percent of eligible voters, the lowest rate in 20 years. Green had also tried to get a law passed that would keep politicians and school employees off the local boards; that proposal was blocked, however, by a federal court.

The search for Green's successor is expected to be drawn-out and marked by friction, just as Green's appointment was last year. With a student population that is 38 percent black and 34 percent Hispanic, the central school board is under pressure to fill the chancellorship with a minority candidate. That pressure became evident when the board's two minority members strongly objected to a proposal to extend the transitional chancellorship of BERNARD MECKLOWITZ, Green's deputy, to a nine-month interim period. Mecklowitz, a white educator, is recognized for having improved Brooklyn's District 1 schools when he served as superintendent there. Nevertheless, the two dissenting board members fear that extending his transitional term would be read by minority parents as an attempt to get Mecklowitz into the chancellor's post permanently. Given the condition of the city's schools, the intensity of the city's electoral politics, and New York's heated racial atmosphere, few expect the next candidate to escape the intense scrutiny Richard Green endured on his way to becoming chancellor of the nation's largest school system.

How to Run a Better Democratic Campaign in 1992

Three Black Democrats Reflect on the Shortcomings of Their Party's 1988 Election Strategies and Recommend Different Approaches for the Future

Editor's note: The following observations of the 1988 presidential campaign by three prominent Democrats are part of a series of articles on Democratic and Republican electoral politics which will appear in Focus *as the Joint Center looks ahead to 1992. Providing their appraisals here are: Ronald H. Brown, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, who was a senior political advisor to the Dukakis-Bentsen campaign and headed Reverend Jesse Jackson's Democratic Convention team; Rep. William Gray (D-Pa.), House Democratic Whip; and Christopher Edley, Jr., Harvard Law School professor, who was issues director for Governor Dukakis's presidential campaign.*

Ronald H. Brown

Running a Campaign Strategy of Inclusion

There is a huge difference between running a party primary campaign and running a general election campaign. Three differences are especially worth keeping in mind for 1992 and beyond.

First, it is possible for a candidate to do well in the primaries by relying on a relatively narrow group of core supporters—narrow in terms of region, economic class, and so on. But in order to win a general election, the candidate must appeal to a much larger and more diverse population. The candidate therefore has to strike a balance: he or she must maintain and invigorate the core support groups while simultaneously reaching out to new parts of the electorate.

Michael Dukakis's strategy during the fall of 1988 was to reach out to the so-called Reagan Democrats. This strategy was partly successful; but by putting so much effort into attracting that group, Dukakis seemed to neglect some of the Democratic Party's most loyal supporters, including black Americans. The blacks who voted, of course, voted overwhelmingly for Dukakis. The problem was that Dukakis did not court this core group of Democratic voters energetically enough to increase their turnout.

Second, it is possible for a candidate, particularly a well-financed candidate, to do well in the primaries even though he or she does not have an experienced campaign team. In order to win a general election, however, the candidate must recruit the most talented and experienced campaign professionals available. This generally involves getting good people from other campaigns.

The Dukakis staff seemed reluctant to bring anyone new into its senior ranks after it emerged from the convention victory. As a result, Dukakis went into the general election with a group of senior advisors who had virtually no previous experience running a presidential campaign. Further, most of Dukakis's senior staffers were from the Northeast and knew little about the rest of the country.

Third, there is a relationship between my first point, broadening the base of support, and my second point, shaping the campaign team for the general election. If a Democratic presidential candidate wants to do well in the South, he or she must have senior campaign operatives who know the South and are known in the South. The same is true if the candidate is trying to attract support from other regions. To run a successful presidential campaign, a candidate must have experienced professionals who reflect this country's great diversity.

William H. Gray

Winning on the Right Issues

There is much Democrats can do to improve their presidential campaign strategies, but our highest priority must be to deal with the right issues in the right way. The four key ingredients for a winning campaign recipe require future Democratic presidential candidates to be: strong on defense, tough on crime, resolute in advocating human rights around the globe, and compassionate on domestic policy.

Defense. First, we must address the perception that the Democratic Party is "soft" on defense. While the perception is wrong, it is nevertheless widespread, and GOP presidential candidates have capitalized on it. Future Democratic presidential candidates must take the initiative on national security questions. They must demonstrate to the public that we intend to use this nation's economic, diplomatic, and military power to protect our vital interests around the world.

Incidentally, black Americans have a growing interest in international affairs and national defense, partly because blacks are heavily represented in the armed forces. So Democratic candidates need not shy away from defense when they try to appeal to black voters.

Crime. Democratic candidates must place more emphasis on personal security and crime in the streets. We must show that we understand the daily dangers that confront so

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How to Run a Better Campaign in 1992

(Continued from page 5)

many of our citizens, particularly the residents of our poor inner-city neighborhoods where drug abuse and violent crime are growing at frightening rates. Our citizens want better police protection; they want those accused of crimes to receive a fair and speedy trial; and they want criminals to be placed where they no longer pose a danger.

Human Rights. The Democratic Party must continue to be resolute on human rights. And our position has to be consistent: we must speak out against human rights abuses abroad whether they occur in the Soviet Union, South Africa, the Sudan, or El Salvador, and whether the perpetrators of those abuses are regarded as friends or as adversaries of the United States.

Human Needs. Democrats must be compassionate on domestic issues. We are the party that helps the disadvantaged, the aged, the handicapped, the victims of racial discrimination and economic dislocation. This is the right thing to do morally—but it also is the smart thing to do. Right now, the Head Start program reaches less than one-quarter of the children who are eligible. That's wrong for moral and practical reasons. An uneducated young person becomes an unemployed, unproductive adult, dependent on welfare and susceptible to all the wrong influences. That's also wrong, for the same reasons.

Christopher Edley, Jr.

Needed: Sensitivity and Experience

One of the most important lessons of this campaign, from my perspective, has to do with the relationship between issues and campaign strategy. That relationship is best understood by looking at what I call resource allocation decisions that have to do with which issues the candidate emphasizes, when, and before which audiences. The candidate's time and words are the most precious resources.

Resource allocation decisions are not made by the candidate, but by his or her senior staff, particularly by the people who edit speeches and plan public appearances. For this reason, the senior campaign advisors must be highly professional and they must be sensitive to the various groups the candidate needs to attract.

During the campaign, the Dukakis position papers were carefully thought out. We solicited advice from a wide range of people, from conservatives such as Senator Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) to Jesse Jackson's policy advisors such as Eleanor Holmes Norton.

But there were problems when we tried to communicate our positions to the general public. The mass media were of little help. Newspapers would quote only a few phrases from a detailed position paper on, say, education, and the electronic media dealt in 30-second "sound bites." Thus, it was up to the candidate to hit on an issue or theme, and to keep hitting on it until it got across to the voters.

This was a major breakdown in communications. Although all of the right things were in the position papers—things that blacks, among others, would have found appealing—unfortunately, those positions did not get articulated. They did not show up, or did not show up often enough, in the candidate's speeches, interviews, and debates. And the central reason is that the resource allocation decisions were not made wisely—and in particular, not made so as to motivate the minority and progressive wings of the party.

Presidential elections cannot be won with a bunch of amateurs recruited primarily from one part of the country—or in our case, mainly from one university, Harvard.

Furthermore, some of us were victims of our own arrogance. Dukakis was far ahead of Bush when the Democratic convention ended, and we thought this demonstrated that we had the best candidate, the best positions on the issues, and the best strategy. This helps to explain why so few changes were made between the primaries and the fall campaign.

These observations lead me to make several suggestions about future campaigns. First, we need to find the most experienced people available. Presidential elections cannot be won with a bunch of amateurs recruited primarily from one part of the country—or in our case, mainly from one university, Harvard.

Second, once the issues have been formulated, the candidate must make the right choices about how and when to communicate them.

Third, in order for black campaign staff to influence the course of a campaign, they must be in strategic positions. From my experience, the most critical positions are those from which one can make resource allocation decisions about the candidate's schedule of public appearances, the content of speeches, the points to be emphasized in debates, and so on.

In order for blacks to occupy those positions, of course, they must have a great deal of previous experience with campaigns. Thus, we should make a concerted effort to develop a larger pool of black campaign operatives. One way to do that is to establish and support black-run organizations that are regularly involved in such activities as polling, advising on media matters, and running political campaigns. You cannot master these skills by emerging every four years from a university or a law firm to work on somebody's presidential campaign. It can only be mastered by doing it, day in and day out, for years.

We must be as well prepared to deal with the nuts and bolts of campaigning as we are to deal with issues. If we are, blacks will be better able to influence the candidates' strategies, and Democrats will fare much better in future presidential elections. ■

Visions Of A Better Way: A Black Appraisal of Public Schooling

America's Schools Must Shift Their Focus From the Supposed Deficiencies of Minority Children to Addressing Institutional Barriers to Academic Progress

"We do not accept any of the facile arguments that seek to evade responsibility for the chronic inequality in our system of education," writes John Hope Franklin in the preface to *Visions Of A Better Way: A Black Appraisal Of Public Schooling*, a recently released essay by the Joint Center's Committee on Policy for Racial Justice. "Second-class schooling for black students, based frequently on low teacher expectations, remains the norm in far too many schools," Franklin says.

Moved by this alarming fact, the 29-member committee, which includes a Nobel laureate and four MacArthur Fellows, has produced a strong statement calling for new directions in the nation's approach to public education. Guided by the expertise of committee member Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, professor at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, the committee's statement faults public schools with reinforcing, rather than overcoming, the country's prevailing race and class prejudices.

"What we must demand," the authors write, "is this: that the schools shift their focus from the supposed deficiencies of the black child—from the alleged inadequacies of black family life—to the barriers that stand in the way of academic success." School officials, they further note, are not likely to change on their own initiative: "We can meet the challenge of ensuring a world-class education for our children *only through political activism.*"

In 1980, black youngsters were three times as likely as whites to be placed in classes for the educable mentally retarded and three times as likely to be suspended from high school. According to the authors, lingering stereotypes and teacher insensitivity contribute to these special problems. "Mistaken notions about low-income people and their lifestyles," they write, "form the basis for low expectations and self-fulfilling prophesies of failure in school." The dearth of black teachers as role models in school, they add, has only contributed to this lack of understanding.

Tracking, the grouping of students by ability or performance into homogenous classrooms, is another problem pinpointed in the essay: "The inflexibility of track placements, like the rigidity of teacher expectations, represents a problem of paramount proportions. Black and other low-income students are often imprisoned in the bottom tracks....In fact, this is one of the major reasons many black students fall further and further behind their peers academically as they advance through the grades."

The authors also voice alarm at schools' growing reliance on standardized tests, which fail to measure the most vital elements of a young person's knowledge. "Contrary to the long-standing view that intelligence is a unitary phenomenon measurable by a single test," they write, "we believe—and recent research confirms—that all people are blessed with multiple intelligences, which can be tapped through a variety of means."

Recommendations. The members of the committee believe the most fundamental step toward resolving the educational crisis is for schools to recognize the centrality of human relationships. As a model, they cite the School Development Program initiated in the public schools of New Haven, Connecticut, by committee member James Comer. In this program, parents, students, teachers, and administrators have been brought together to work cooperatively in the classroom and in other school activities. "We can no longer assume that parents and teachers share values," the authors point out. "We must...construct new patterns of interactions so that the powerful social networks that nurture and develop the child in the home and community are less alienated from the culture of the school."

The committee members observe that many models have proven their success and deserve to be emulated. They call for the abandonment of rigid systems of tracking and note that "staff development programs in multicultural education are an example of a readily available avenue that must be seized upon to address issues of diversity within regular classroom settings." They further urge that two successful early childhood education programs, Head Start and Chapter 1, receive increased federal funding so that the large number of qualified children who are not participating in these programs may do so.

Making curriculums more inclusive of black culture and attracting black teachers to the profession in greater numbers are also recommended to overcome the alienation of minority students. "Until more children look into the eyes of teachers and see themselves reflected—and until more teachers look into the eyes of children and see themselves reflected," the authors state, "many of those children will feel excluded from the educational enterprise." ■

Copies can be purchased through the Order Department, Joint Center for Political Studies Press, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706; telephone 301-459-3366.

Reviewed by Marc DeFrancis, senior editor at the Joint Center.

First Annual
Dr. Charles R. Drew Medical Prize

This fall, the first Dr. Charles R. Drew World Medical Prizes, sponsored by Howard University Hospital, will be awarded to two outstanding persons of color for significant contributions in health research, public health, or the delivery of health care. The awards will be presented at a dinner at the Washington Hilton Hotel on October 11, 1989. One of the two annual $50,000 prizes will be awarded to a U.S. citizen and the other to a person from a developing country.

Dr. Charles R. Drew, in whose honor the award is named, was a black physician-scientist who pioneered techniques for blood preservation. Credited with saving countless lives during World War II, Drew directed the "Blood for Britain" project in 1940 as well as the first American Red Cross blood bank supplying the Allies. He was chief of surgery at Freedman's Hospital (predecessor to Howard University Hospital) from 1941 until his death in 1950.

Howard University Hospital, which has established an endowment to recognize exemplary individuals in the health field, is now accepting nominations for this year's awards. Nominations must be received no later than August 1, 1989; recipients will be notified by September 1. Inquiries regarding nominations and the awards dinner should be directed to:

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